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FOR ADMIRAL ALLEN

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [SMIG](#) [SNAR](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR VISIT OF ADMIRAL THAD W. ALLEN,
COMMANDANT, U.S. COAST GUARD, MAY 12-13, 2008

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES HUGO LLORENS, REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D).

11. (SBU) Summary: The Embassy Madrid Country Team warmly welcomes your visit. It will provide an important opportunity to highlight the importance we place on the relationship, particularly as it concerns our strategic interests such as the fight against terrorism and transnational crime. We also enjoy a strong military to military relationship. Spain has long fought a domestic terrorist threat from ETA and suffered tragically from Islamic extremism in the 2004 Madrid train bombings. Additionally, Spain is a key market and point of entry to Europe for Latin American narcotics traffickers and faces a large and growing challenge from illegal immigration and alien smugglers. We have a great deal in common when it comes to counter-terrorism and law enforcement, and we need to be innovative in finding new and improved avenues for bilateral cooperation against the common threats we face. End summary.

Itinerary

12. (C) In addition to a Country Team briefing, you will be meeting with Spanish Chief of Naval Operations Admiral General Sebastian Zaragoza. Zaragoza has been CNO since 2004, and may be replaced this year, although nothing has been announced. Zaragoza is a good friend of the Embassy and decidedly pro-U.S. He speaks warmly of the Eisenhower Administration's decision to seek a closer relationship with Spain, which he says marked the beginning of the modernization of the Spanish Navy. Zaragoza's commands at sea included a minesweeper, a rescue vessel, and a frigate. On shore, he served with NATO in Naples (the first Spanish officer to do so) and has been Chief of Plans for the Defense Staff, Chief of Staff for the Director of Defense Policy, President of the Spanish Section of the U.S.-Spain Permanent Committee (which administers our bilateral defense cooperation agreement), and Chief of the Plans Division of the Navy Staff.

13. (C) You will also meet with the new Director General of the National Police and Civil Guard, Francisco Javier Velasquez. He has been on the job for three weeks. His background is political rather than law enforcement. His most recent position was Secretary of State for Tourism. Not only is Velasquez new to the job, but the job is relatively new to Spain. The Director General (Mando Unico) was created in 2005 with a view towards encouraging Spain's two national police forces to work more harmoniously. This is a work in progress.

Counter-Terrorism

14. (C) Spain is an al-Qaeda target and a critical player in U.S.-EU counter-terrorism efforts due to its proximity to the Maghreb and a population that includes more than one million Muslims, mostly immigrants. Al-Qaeda has called for attacks to recapture the medieval "Al Andalus." The Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco are a fixation for some extremists. On March 11, 2004, Madrid suffered bloody train bombings perpetrated by Islamic extremists. The Spanish Government considers the threat from Islamic terrorism to be one of its top national security priorities and has identified numerous Islamic extremist groups operating within its borders. The Spanish are actively pursuing Islamic extremism terrorism-related investigations and have scores of suspects in jail. Public opinion polling shows nearly three quarters of Spaniards worried about the threat of Islamic fundamentalism, more than in the U.S. or Europe as a whole.

15. (C) Bilateral cooperation is strong. Spain pursues an aggressive agenda in law enforcement, judicial, and information-sharing efforts with us. One example is the HSPD-6 agreement we signed in 2007 to facilitate the sharing of information between our national counter-terrorism authorities. Spain participates in the Container Security Initiative (in the ports of Algeciras, Barcelona, and Valencia) and the Megaports Initiative to detect radioactive cargo (in the port of Algeciras with anticipated expansion to Barcelona and Valencia in the upcoming year). Spain also participates in the Proliferation Security Initiative. Stovepipes within the Spanish system and interagency rivalries are a continuing challenge both for them and us. In addition to the threat from Islamic extremists, Spain has been fighting the domestic terrorists of the Basque Fatherland and Liberty (ETA) for four decades.

Counter-Narcotics -----

16. (SBU) The Spanish Government ranks drug trafficking as one of its most important law enforcement concerns and maintains excellent relations with U.S. law enforcement. We are eager to find ways to increase bilateral cooperation and to encourage Spain to engage more aggressively with law enforcement authorities in key Latin American countries. Spain remains the principal entry, transshipment, and consumption zone for the large quantities of South American cocaine and Moroccan cannabis destined for European consumer markets, and is also a major source and transit location for drug proceeds returning to South and Central America. Colombia appears to be the largest supplier of cocaine from Latin America, although some information suggests an increase in shipments from Bolivia, via Venezuela and Argentina by vessel or plane to the Iberian Peninsula. Spain's strategic location, combined with the lack of a language barrier, has enabled South American drug trafficking organizations to establish themselves with relative ease.

17. (SBU) Spain also faces a sustained flow of hashish from its southern neighbors, Morocco and Algeria, which makes maritime smuggling across the Mediterranean a large-scale business. Seizures of multi-ton loads of Moroccan hashish are not uncommon, some of it brought into Spain by illegal immigrants. The majority of the heroin that arrives in Spain is transported via the Balkan route from Turkey. The National Police have identified established Turkish trafficking organizations that distribute the heroin once it is smuggled into Spain. For two years in a row, Spanish authorities have seized near-record amounts of cocaine and heroin. Many of the more significant seizures were a result of the close cooperation between the Spanish authorities and the DEA Madrid Country Office. In May 2007, Spain hosted the International Drug Enforcement Conference (IDEC) in Madrid, the first time IDEC had been held outside of the Western Hemisphere. Also in 2007, Spain and six other EU countries deepened their counter-narcotics cooperation by signing an international agreement creating the Maritime Analysis and Operations Center (MAOC), headquartered in Lisbon.

¶8. (C) There is no exact USCG equivalent in Spain. The premier Spanish law enforcement agencies are the National Police and the Civil Guard, both of which fall under the Ministry of Interior. Their jurisdictions overlap to a significant degree, although historically the Civil Guard has a stronger presence in rural areas and small towns. Both agencies have investigative jurisdiction over all types of crimes including alien smuggling, human trafficking, terrorism and terrorist financing, and narcotics. The National Police also have jurisdiction over documentation for nationals and foreigners (passports, residence cards, and national identity documents). The Civil Guard's authorities include contraband and customs control. The Spanish Customs Service, under the Ministry of the Treasury, also carries a mandate to enforce anti-drug legislation at Spain's borders and in Spanish waters. Spain's Organized Crime Intelligence Center (CICO) coordinates (with varying degrees of success) counter-narcotics operations among various government agencies, including the National Police, Civil Guard, and Customs Service. Although it does not have a domestic law enforcement function, the Spanish Navy acts on the high seas and also has assets operating in coastal waters.

¶9. (C) Spanish authorities maintain active links with JIATF-S. The Commander of USSOUTHCOM and the Director of JIATF-S both visited Spain in 2007 to encourage even greater cooperation, and the Spanish Chief of Defense will visit USSOUTHCOM this month. We hope these interactions will yield concrete results in terms of greater Spanish engagement in interdicting the flow of drugs and money from and to Latin America. CICO has a liaison officer assigned to JIATF-S. DEA Madrid works closely with Spanish counterparts to follow-up on information shared between DEA Tampa, which handles PANEX North, and JIATF-S. Operation All-Inclusive-Spain, from February to May 2007, was an excellent example of such cooperation.

Immigration and Alien Smuggling -----

¶10. (U) Historically Spain received few immigrants, but the rapidly increasing prosperity of recent decades has changed that. Immigrants now account for about ten percent of the population. There are over three million registered immigrants. Latin America (mainly Ecuador, Colombia, Bolivia, and Argentina) is the largest source region. There is also a strong Romanian element. However, the single largest nationality is Moroccan, with 600,000 registered. There is also a large Pakistani community -- more than 60,000 living in the Barcelona area alone -- most of them unaccompanied young men. In general, Spain has been welcoming to immigrants (many Latin Americans have found their way into the military), but a souring economy may change that. Spain is also awakening to the danger illegal immigration represents in terms of terrorism and organized crime. Reports of illegal immigrants arriving from North Africa via mother ships receive significant press play as do frequent arrivals of boatloads of illegal immigrants in the Canaries. The Civil Guard has responsibility for policing as well as social and humanitarian functions with respect to illegal immigration. Of the three routes for illegal immigration (air, land, and maritime), the maritime flow has expanded most significantly with the appearance of small boats (pateras or cayucos). During the Summer of 2006 these small boats carried over 30,000 illegal immigrants to the Canaries. The Civil Guard manages a coordination and communications center in Las Palmas. From this center, Spanish and EU air and sea operations are directed against maritime alien smuggling. The center's objectives are deterrence, interdiction, and rescue. The center has brought about a significant reduction in illegal immigration to the Canary Islands. Members of the National Police and Civil Guard are also deployed in Africa (Morocco, Cape Verde, Senegal, and Mauritania) in Project Sea Horse. This includes

liaison, equipment, and training. Numerous other projects are underway to work in concert with other countries to stem the flow of illegal immigration (e.g., joint projects with Morocco related to Ceuta and Melilla, FRONTEX, and the Euro-Africa Conference).

Military and Diplomatic Cooperation

¶11. (C) Spanish military cooperation is important. The bases of Rota and Moron are strategic hubs, midway between the U.S. and Afghanistan and Iraq. U.S. planes and ships account for over 4,000 flights and 250 port calls a year in Spain. The Spanish military, particularly the Navy, is pro-U.S. and pro-NATO. The Navy employs the AEGIS system in its frigates, is eager to acquire Tomahawk, and is interested in the Joint Strike Fighter. Spanish defense industry is a supplier to the U.S. As you know, the USCG has so far bought eight EADS-CASA CN-235-300M maritime patrol aircraft (\$245 million total). Although the Zapatero government has imposed a ceiling of 3,000 on troop deployments, Spain has troops in Lebanon (1,100), Afghanistan (750), Kosovo (500), Bosnia (260), and a smattering of others in various UN & EU observer missions.

¶12. (C) On the diplomatic front, Spain in recent years has more often been a follower than a leader, looking to stay within EU consensus on issues such as Iran and missile defense. Spain has yet to recognize Kosovo. Nonetheless, its commitment to KFOR remains firm. Spain is supportive of U.S. efforts towards Middle East peace. Driven by the twin threats of terrorism and illegal immigration, Spain is also increasing its engagement with the countries of North and Western Africa.

¶13. (C) Spain invests heavily in Latin America and wields significant influence there. Like the U.S., Spain wants strong democratic and free market institutions in the region. We have sharply differing views on Cuba. Spain believes it can encourage change via engagement. We take every opportunity to remind the Spanish that the Cuban regime is only interested in survival and that the Cuban dissidents need and deserve the active and visible support of democracies everywhere. On Venezuela, the socialists' early efforts at constructive engagement with Chavez have gone sour. Nevertheless, Spain appears to be going ahead with the sale of four ocean-going patrol ships and four Coast Guard-type high seas patrol ships (plans to sell aircraft to Venezuela were scuttled when the U.S. objected to the transfer of U.S. technology in the aircraft).

Political and Economic Climate

¶14. (C) President Zapatero's center left Spanish Socialist Workers, Party (PSOE) was the victor in the March 9 general election. Zapatero's new cabinet includes Spain's first-ever female Minister of Defense, Carme Chacon. Alfredo Perez Rubalcaba will remain in place as Minister of Interior. The principal opposition party remains the center right Popular Party (PP). The Spanish public is skeptical of U.S. foreign policy but supportive of good bilateral relations.

¶15. (SBU) Spain has enjoyed one of the fastest growing economies in Europe, but growth is slowing significantly. A housing boom that had contributed greatly to growth for several years ended abruptly last year and prices are stagnating, construction slowing, and unemployment and inflation rising. U.S. investment has long been important to the economy (more so than bilateral trade), but the tables have turned. In 2007, Spain was the fourth largest foreign investor in the U.S., with particular emphasis in banking, construction, and renewable energy.

Conclusion

¶16. (U) Again, we are looking forward to your visit. As the second Zapatero government gets underway, we need to set the stage for ever-improving cooperation in the fight against terrorism and transnational crime. We face common threats, the Spanish law enforcement and military services are capable, and Spain sits in a strategic location. There is much we can do together.
Llorens